

RELEASED IN FULL

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AF-00	AMAD-00	CIAE-00	INL-00	USNW-00
	DODE-00	SRPP-00	EAP-00	EUR-00	UTED-00	VC-00	TEDE-00
	INR-00	IO-00	LAB-01	VCE-00	DCP-01	NSAE-00	DHS-00
	PA-00	PRS-00	SP-00	TEST-00	USIE-00	IIP-00	PRM-00
	DRL-01	G-00	NFAT-00	SAS-00	/003W		
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FM AMEMBASSY RABAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3889

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SECSTATE FOR NEA/PPD, NEA/ENA, IIP/G/NEA/SA

LONDON FOR HKANONA AND POL - GOLDRICH

PARIS FOR POL

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: OPRC, MO, KMDR

SUBJECT: MOROCCO MEDIA REACTION: MAY 10 - 12, 2003

EDITORIALS AND LEAD STORIES

PRESIDENT'S SPEECH

POST SENT A COPY OF THE SPEECH TO ALL MEDIA CONTACTS, AND
COVERAGE ON SUNDAY/MONDAY WAS EXTENSIVE AND STRAIGHTFORWARD,
STRESSING THE PRESIDENT'S MENTION OF RECENT ELECTIONS IN
MOROCCO AND BAHRAIN.

- "BUSH WANTS FTA FOR THE MIDDLE EAST," HEADLINE OF AN

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INSIDE PAGE ARTICLE, IN "L'ECONOMISTE" (INDEPENDENT, FRENCH-LANGUAGE BUSINESS ORIENTED DAILY, CIRC 22,000,) ON 4/12:

"THE OFFER MIGHT BE WELL RECEIVED IN THE REGION. GEORGE BUSH PRESENTED, LAST FRIDAY, A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR THE MIDDLE EAST SUGGESTING MAINLY THE ESTABLISHMENT, IN TEN YEARS, OF A FTA BETWEEN THIS REGION AND THE U.S. ... PRESIDENT BUSH WILL TIE HIS OFFER TO REFORMS SUCH AS THE STRUGGLE AGAINST CORRUPTION, TERRORISM AND PROTECTION OF PROPERTY RIGHTS."

- "MEDI-1" (SEMI-INDEPENDENT REGIONAL RADIO, AUDIENCE ABOUT 30 MILLION) HIGHLIGHT FROM NEWS BULLETINS ON 5/10:

"PRESIDENT BUSH OUTLINED A PLAN TO CREATE A U.S. MIDDLE EAST FREE TRADE AREA WITHIN TEN YEARS, IN AN ADDRESS AT UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA. BUSH WANTS TO BRING THE MIDDLE EAST INTO AN EXPANDING CIRCLE OF OPPORTUNITY TO PROVIDE HOPE FOR THE PEOPLE WHO LIVE IN THE REGION. HOPE WILL BE ESTABLISHED WHEN THE CRISIS IN THE MIDDLE EAST FINDS THE RIGHT SOLUTION AND ENDS ITS DOUBLE-STANDARD POLICY."

- "RTM-TV" (GOVERNMENT-OWNED TV, VIEWERS ABOUT 30 MILLION) HIGHLIGHT FROM EVENING PRIME TIME NEWS ON 5/10: "THE UNITED STATES HAS ALREADY FTA WITH JORDAN AND IS NEGOTIATING ONE WITH MOROCCO. WHEN A CRITICAL MASS OF BILATERAL FTAS IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA HAS BEEN ACHIEVED, THE UNITED STATES WILL TRY TO FASHION A GLOBAL SINGLE FREE TRADE REGION WITHIN A DECADE."

- "BUSH COMMITS HIMSELF CAREFULLY TO THE ROADMAP: WASHINGTON SUGGESTS PEACE AND FTA FOR THE MIDDLE EAST," IS THE HEADLINE OF A FRONT PAGE ARTICLE, SIGNED BY MUSTAPHA ALAOU, IN "LE MATIN" (SEMI-OFFICIAL, FRENCH-LANGUAGE DAILY, CIRC. 50,000) ON 5/11:

"'THE ARAB WORLD IS PROGRESSING TOWARDS DEMOCRACY.' BUSH'S ADDRESS ... HIGHLIGHTED FREE ELECTIONS IN MOROCCO AND BAHREIN, DESCRIBED BY BUSH AS 'SIGNS OF HOPE.' PRESIDENT BUSH NOTED THAT JORDAN WOULD HOLD ELECTIONS IN THE COMING MONTH. ... PRESIDENT BUSH OUTLINED A PLAN TO CREATE A U.S. MIDDLE EAST FREE TRADE AREA WITHIN TEN YEARS."

- "AL ALAM" (GOVERNMENT COALITION, ARABIC-LANGUAGE DAILY, ISTIQLAL PARTY, CIRC. 55,000) ON 5/11, PUBLISHED A FRONT

PAGE STORY UNDER THE TITLE: "PRESIDENT BUSH PRAISED ELECTIONS IN MOROCCO," CARRYING A BRIEF EXCERPTS OF PRESIDENT BUSH'S REMARKS, LAST FRIDAY, IN SOUTH CAROLINA WHERE HE STRESSED 'RECENT FREE ELECTIONS IN BOTH MOROCCO AND BAHRAIN THAT REPRESENT SIGNS OF HOPE AND THAT THE ARAB WORLD IS HEADING TOWARDS DEMOCRACY.'"

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- "L'OPINION" (GOVERNMENT COALITION, FRENCH-LANGUAGE DAILY, CIRC. 5,000, ISTIQLAL PARTY) ON 5/11 AND "MAP" (OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT NEWS AGENCY) WROTE:
"US PRESIDENT CITES FREE ELECTIONS IN MOROCCO AND BAHRAIN AS SIGNS OF CHANGE:

"US PRESIDENT CITED ON FRIDAY FREE ELECTIONS HELD RECENTLY IN MOROCCO AND BAHRAIN AS HOPEFUL SIGNS OF CHANGE IN THE ARAB WORLD.

THE US CHIEF EXECUTIVE SAID, "WE ALSO SEE HOPEFUL SIGNS OF CHANGE. ABOUT HALF OF ALL THE MUSLIM PEOPLE LIVE UNDER DEMOCRATIC RULE IN NATIONS FROM TURKEY TO INDONESIA, STRESSING "THE GOVERNMENTS OF BAHRAIN AND MOROCCO HAVE HELD RECENT AND FREE ELECTIONS. AND JORDAN WILL HOLD ELECTIONS NEXT MONTH."

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ION GUARANTEEING BASIC
FREEDOMS AND A PROPOSAL BY CROWN PRINCE ABDALLAH OF SAUDI ARABIA FOR A NEW ARAB CHARTER CALLING FOR INTERNAL REFORM AND ENHANCED POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN NATIONS OF THE REGION. "

DAR AMERICA INTERACTIVE/U.S. FOREIGN POLICY

- "DAR AMERICA DIALOGUE WITH ONE OF THE CLOSE AIDES OF BUSH ADMINISTRATION," FRONT PAGE ARTICLE, BY MOHAMED LAKHDADI, IN "ASSAHARA" (SEMI-OFFICIAL ARABIC-LANGUAGE DAILY, CIRC. 35,000) ON 5/10:

"DAR AMERICA - CASABLANCA ORGANIZED, LAST WEDNESDAY, AN INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE WITH A VISITING PROFESSOR AT THE AMERICAN. ENTERPRISE INSTITUTE ON U.S. FOREIGN POLICY: ... THE DIALOGUE FOCUSED ON BUSH ADMINISTRATION'S POLICY FOLLOWING SEPTEMBER 11 ATTACKS AND U.S. POLICY IN IRAQ, THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE AND THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST... THE ABSENCE OF A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE MORE LIBERAL THINKING, NED WALKER, FROM THIS DIALOGUE TURNED THE INTERACTIVE INTO AN EXHIBIT AND REPETITION OF STATEMENTS MADE BY U.S. OFFICIALS INCLUDING PRESIDENT BUSH, SECRETARY OF DEFENSE DONALD RUMSFELD AND COLIN POWELL... THE GUEST'S VISION REFLECTED THE BIG INFLUENCE OF RIGHTIST CONSERVATIVES THINK-TANKS ON U.S. FOREIGN POLICY."

POWELL'S VISIT IN THE MIDDLE EAST

- "MEDI-1" (SEMI-INDEPENDENT REGIONAL RADIO, AUDIENCE ABOUT 30 MILLION,) HIGHLIGHT FROM NEWS BULLETINS ON 5/12 " POWELL IS VISITING ISRAEL, THE WEST BANK, JORDAN, EGYPT AND SAUDI

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ARABIA STARTING MAY 9. THE REASON IS TO CALL ALL THE PARTIES TO THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES AND IMPLEMENT THE ROADMAP. AMERICANS WANT TO ACHIEVE TWO STATES, ISRAEL AND PALESTINE, LIVING SIDE-BY-SIDE IN SECURITY AND PROSPERITY AND IN PEACE. ISRAELI PM SHARON IS NOT ALLOWING POWELL TO SUCCEED."

MIDDLE EAST

- "A SUMMIT BETWEEN MAHMOUD ABBAS AND ARIEL SHARON WILL TAKE PLACE SOON," FRONT PAGE COMMENTARY, BY HASSAN ALAOU, IN "LE MATIN" (SEMI-OFFICIAL, FRENCH-LANGUAGE DAILY, CIRC. 50,000,) ON 4/12:

"PEACE PROCESS IN THE MIDDLE EAST, SPONSORED BY THE U.S., WAS AGAIN PUT BACK ON TRACK LAST WEEK END WITH POWELL TRIP IN ISRAEL AND IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES. THE OBJECTIVE OF THE DISCUSSIONS OF THE AMERICAN DIPLOMAT IS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PEACE PLAN THAT GEORGE BUSH SUGGESTED ON JULY 4, 2002 THROUGH THE FAMOUS ROADMAP THAT THE QUARTET ELABORATED. ... ASSURED OF ITS SUCCESS SINCE THE BEGINNING, THE PEACE PLAN AIMS AT ENDING THE DISTRUST BETWEEN ISRAELIS AND PALESTINIANS."

- "MEDI-1" (SEMI-INDEPENDENT REGIONAL RADIO, AUDIENCE ABOUT 30 MILLION,) HIGHLIGHT FROM NEWS BULLETINS ON 5/10:
"PRESIDENT BUSH WILL MEET WITH ARIEL SHARON ON MAY 20. BOTH WILL DISCUSS EFFORTS TO MOVE AHEAD TOWARD A PEACE SETTLEMENT BETWEEN PALESTINIANS AND ISRAELIS."

IRAQ

- "DEMOCRACY ACCORDING TO WASHINGTON," HEADLINE OF AN INSIDE PAGE COMMENTARY BY KHALID JAMAI, IN "LE JOURNAL HEBDOMADAIRE" (INDEPENDENT, FRENCH-LANGUAGE POLITICAL WEEKLY, CIRC. 30,000,) ON 4/10:

"WASHINGTON WILL REFUSE TO RECOGNIZE AN ISLAMIC REGIME IN IRAQ. THE MAN WHO HAS MADE THIS SURPRISING STATEMENT TO 'EL PAIS' IS DONALD RUMSFELD AND YET AMERICANS HAVE NEVER CEASED TO SAY THAT THEY INTERVENED IN IRAQ ... TO ESTABLISH DEMOCRACY. THIS IMPLIES, IN PRINCIPLE, RESPECT OF POPULAR WILL. THIS MEANS THAT WASHINGTON HAS ITS OWN CONCEPT OF

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LITICAL, GEO- STRATEGIC AND ECONOMIC INTERESTS. IN ONE WORD, TO VITAL AMERICAN INTERESTS, REGARDLESS OF WHAT THE PEOPLE MAY WANT."

COOPERATION ON SECURITY MATTERS

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- ABU BAKR JAMAI SIGNED AN EDITORIAL, IN LE JOURNAL HEBDOMADAIRE" (INDEPENDENT, FRENCH-LANGUAGE POLITICAL WEEKLY, CIRC. 30,000,) ON 5/10:

" 'WASHINGTON POST' HAS RECENTLY REVEALED THE DEAL BETWEEN THE FBI AND THE CIA AND MOROCCAN, EGYPTIAN AND JORDANIAN SECRET SERVICES, THE STRONG-ARMED QUESTIONING OF PRESUMED ELEMENTS OF 'AL-QAEDA'. WE HEARD THAT MOROCCANS WERE MORE EAGER THAN THE OTHERS TO COOPERATE.... IF EGYPTIAN SERVICES HAVE CERTAINLY CARRIED OUT THE BAD JOB FOR AMERICANS, THEY HAVE ALSO SUCCEEDED IN OTHER DEALS THAT MOROCCAN SECURITY HAS FORGOTTEN CAREFULLY TO MENTION: THE RESOLUTION OF THE CONFLICT BETWEEN ARAFAT AND ABU MAZEN WAS POSSIBLE THANKS TO THE HEAD OF THE EGYPTIAN SECRET SERVICES. ... THE EXPERTISE AND 'ARAB' CREDIBILITY OF EGYPTIANS HAVE ALLOWED THEM TO PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE. SOME YEARS AGO, MOROCCO HAD THIS STATURE."

- "LE MATIN" (SEMI-OFFICIAL, FRENCH-LANGUAGE DAILY, CIRC. 50,000,) ON 5/12, INTERVIEWED SAMIRA SITTAEL, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF OF "2M" GOVERNMENT-OWNED TV, VIEWERS ABOUT 20 MILLION,) WHO SAID "ISLAMISTS OF PARTY OF JUSTICE AND DEVELOPMENT HAVE NOT BEEN CENSORED BUT '2M' HAS AN EDITORIAL POLICY AND EDITORIAL CHOICES. ... TV WAS NEVER MEANT FOR FILMING MEETINGS OF PARTIES, WITH SOME TALKING BEFORE SILENT PEOPLE."

MOROCCO DENIED PRESENCE OF TAREQ AZIZ

- ALL MOROCCAN PRINT MEDIA CARRIED MAP STORY DENYING THE PRESENCE OF IRAQI DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER TAREQ AZIZ IN MOROCCO. A SOURCE CLOSE TO THE MOROCCAN FOREIGN AFFAIRS MINISTRY STATED THAT TAREQ AZIZ WAS NOT PRESENT IN MOROCCO, DENYING CATEGORICALLY PRESS REPORTS CIRCULATED BY SOME FOREIGN MEDIA ON THE PRESENCE OF TAREQ AZIZ IN MOROCCO.

MIDDLE EAST ROADMAP

EDITORIALIZED HEADLINES

- "POWELL ENDS HIS VISIT TO ISRAEL AND OCCUPIED TERRITORIES; SATISFACTION FROM SHARON AND MORE PRESSURE ON ABU MAZEN", IN "AL AHDATH AL MAGHREBIYA" (INDEPENDENT ARABIC-LANGUAGE DAILY, CIRC. 80,000) ON 5/12.

- "COLIN POWELL OFFERS U.S. ASSISTANCE TO PALESTINIANS TO CURB RESISTANCE", IN "AL ITTIHAD AL ISHTIRAKI" (GOVERNMENT COALITION, ARABIC-LANGUAGE DAILY, USFP PARTY, CIRC. 65,000) ON 5/12.

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- "POWELL IN HIS NEW TOUR TO THE MIDDLE EAST HAS NOT MET WITH ARAFAT; WASHINGTON AND TEL AVIV: STRATEGIC POSITION ON PAPER" IN "ASSAHARA" (SEMI-OFFICIAL ARABIC-LANGUAGE DAILY, CIRC. 35,000) ON 5/12.

TV CHANNEL FOR MUSLIM COMMUNITY IN THE U.S.

- "AL ALAM" (GOVERNMENT COALITION, ARABIC-LANGUAGE DAILY, ISTIQLAL PARTY, CIRC. 55,000) ON 5/12 CARRIED A FRONT PAGE STORY UNDER THE TITLE "TWO MOROCCAN IMMIGRANTS PLAN TO CREATE A TV CHANNEL FOR AMERICAN MUSLIMS" SAYING:

"TWO MOROCCAN IMMIGRANTS WHO LIVE IN TEXAS ARE PLANNING TO CREATE A CABLE TV CHANNEL WHICH WILL TARGET IN PRINCIPLE AMERICAN MUSLIMS. MOHAMED ALAOU AND OMAR AMNET HAVE SAID THAT THEIR CHANNEL CALLED 'BRIDGES TV' HAS ENJOYED THE SUPPORT OF ABOUT 1,500 SUBSCRIBERS INCLUDING FORMER HEAVY BOXING WORLD CHAMPION MOHAMED ALI CLAY. THE TWO MOROCCANS

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ERICAN MUSLIMS AN
OPPORTUNITY TO ESTABLISH DIALOGUE VIA THIS NEW CHANNEL LIKE
OTHER COMMUNITIES IN THE U.S."

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